



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase XI

ML 2025 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/03/2024

**Proposal Title:** RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase XI

**Funds Requested:** \$10,000,000

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** -

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Dusty Van Thuyne

**Title:** Easement Programs Coordinator

**Organization:** BWSR

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):**

**Eco regions in which work will take place:**

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Southeast Forest
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban
- Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Easement
- Restore

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Prairie

**Narrative****Abstract**

This continuation of the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve buffers program will protect and restore riparian areas, permanently protecting approximately 823 acres on 14 easements. This program will continue utilizing a science-based ranking and selection process and be implemented locally, working with Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff in targeted areas in the state. Historically, buffer funding was used to expand basic water quality buffers. The focus of the funding has been modified in recent phases to include larger areas (floodplain scale) rather than the narrower areas traditionally thought of as riparian buffers.

**Design and Scope of Work**

Riparian corridors containing healthy buffer and floodplain areas contribute to clean water and provide critical wildlife habitat and travel corridors. The MN Buffer Law requires perennial vegetative buffers of up to 50 feet along lakes, rivers, and streams and buffers of 16.5 feet along ditches but does not necessarily accommodate flooding issues and allows continued disturbance of these areas, which is not favorable to wildlife. By extending the minimum required buffer area, we can create significantly better wildlife habitat while achieving multiple benefits. This partnership program between Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, and potentially the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), would establish permanent riparian areas that provide both critical water quality improvements and improved habitat.

Criteria used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded under this program include existing CRP contracts, proximity to other permanently protected habitat, proximity to lands open to public hunting, One Watershed, One Plans or other comprehensive water plans, type of water resource being buffered, overall size, proximity to threatened and endangered species, and frequency of inundation or crop loss. A competitive RIM Riparian application process for landowners will be used. The goal for this phase will be funding from both LSOHC and Clean Water Funding as well as USDA when possible under existing or new CRP enrollment. Wider riparian areas provide long-term water quality treatment and increased habitat. Buffers that are established in proximity to other grasslands also function at a higher level within the landscape for grassland nesting birds and other wildlife.

The RIM Buffers program delivery will be supported by delivery through SWCDs and administered by BWSR.

**Explain how the proposal addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation**

Buffers are commonly viewed as simply a water quality practice, but buffers have positive impacts on wildlife due to their unique habitat. This is especially true for expanded width buffers enrolled through this program. Not only are grasslands protected or restored, detrimental impacts to stream-reliant biota is reduced. Many species of amphibians, such as the Northern Cricket Frog (endangered) rely on aquatic habitat during the breeding season and then spend most of their lives in upland habitat. In southeastern MN, reptiles such as the Blanding's Turtle (threatened) rely on meandering streams, rivers, and adjacent lands.

The Sedge Wren, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) most commonly associated with grassland habitat, is encountered in buffer areas. Bird use is influenced by buffer width with greater widths experiencing greater abundance and diversity of birds and grassland species. However, bird use is negatively associated by the

amount of edge exposure. In an effort to limit edge exposure, sites that may serve as corridors or expand current complexes receive higher weight using this program's scoring and ranking process.

Diverse vegetation, access to a water resource, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative have outlined the RIM Program's commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Buffers provide areas that are safe from pesticides and are natural passageways for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and solitary bee species including Leafcutter Bees, Mason Bees, and Yellow-faced Bees.

SGCN in the RIM Buffers area include the Five-lined Skink, Two-spotted Skipper, Northern Pintail, American Black Duck, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Dickcissel, and Western Grebe. In addition to the SGCN, the threatened or endangered species targeted in this proposal include the Dakota Skipper, Poweshiek Skipperling, and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.

### **What are the elements of this proposal that are critical from a timing perspective?**

CRP contracts continue to expire (230,000 acres with a contract expiring in Minnesota federal fiscal years 2025 - 2027) and farming pressure leads to more habitat fragmentation and agricultural fields within the floodplain. It is critical to retain as many acres of habitat in the most important locations. A combination of permanent protection with RIM and re-enrollment of CRP, when possible, will reduce this impact from habitat loss.

### **Describe how the proposal expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:**

Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, as well as the site-specific features.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to evaluate a site's importance as a corridor or extension to an existing habitat complex. Other examples of the science-based targeting used include drainage to shallow lakes, buffering along lakeshore, planned vegetative diversity, and proximity to land open to public hunting.

As we implement this phase, we will utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Buffers program.

### **Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?**

- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

### **Explain how this proposal will uniquely address habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish & wildlife species utilizing the protected or restored/enhanced habitat this proposal targets.**

This proposal will contribute to at least four Priority Actions under Goal 2 (Climate-smart natural and working lands) of the MN Climate Action Framework. The four Priority Actions are: 1) accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration; 2) store more carbon; 3) restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors; and 4) increase water storage and infiltration, and manage drainage.

## Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

### Forest / Prairie Transition

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

### Metro / Urban

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

### Northern Forest

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

### Prairie

- Protect expiring CRP lands

### Southeast Forest

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

## Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife, and if not permanent outcomes, why it is important to undertake at this time:

Southeast Forest and Northern Forest Sections - protection and restoration of riparian buffers provides habitat for both game and nongame wildlife.

Forest/Prairie Transition Section - this program targets and restores existing corridors and complexes, as well as those areas where complexes exist but the addition of a buffer provides a needed connection. This reflects the outcome of diverse and productive grasslands and wetlands that are connected by corridors, providing multiple benefits in the face of climate change and other major stressors.

Metro Section - the focus on corridors is no different, as sites are analyzed for their function as habitat linkages.

Prairie Section - this program prioritizes expiring CRP acres.

## Outcomes

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

**Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:**

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

**Programs in the northern forest region:**

- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

**Programs in prairie region:**

- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

**Programs in southeast forest region:**

- Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

**What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this proposal?**

- Clean Water Fund

**Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.**

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

**How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?**

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings and

report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are \$10,000 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time, travel costs, and other costs for easement monitoring, encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations, and legal enforcement.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2025-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year.	Corrective actions of any violations.	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General's office.
2025-Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easements.	-	-

**Provide an assessment of how your program may celebrate cultural diversity or reach diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:**

For our statewide programs, BWSR will pilot designating a percentage of the easement acquisition budget line for applicants who self-certify as emerging farmers or from underserved populations, including Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). If funds remain at the end of a predetermined number of scoring/ranking periods and there are no additional applicants, the remaining funds would be added to the larger easement acquisition pool of funding. Being a statewide program, rural communities and areas of the state with lower annual income thresholds will benefit from this program in several ways, including financial benefits. RIM easements not only offer financial benefits for landowners, but they also require outreach, monitoring and maintenance which help maintain and grow rural jobs and economies.

**Activity Details**

**Requirements**

**Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?**

Yes

**Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?**

Yes

**Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

**Land Use**

**Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?**

Yes

**Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:**

In certain circumstances, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as part of an approved conservation plan. Food plots on narrow buffers, steep slopes, and wet areas are not allowed. RIM policy limits food plots to 10% of the total easement area or five acres, whichever is less. There is no cost-share for establishment of food plots and upon termination, the landowner must re-establish vegetation as prescribed in the conservation plan at their expense. Food plots are infrequently used by landowners, to date less than 3% of RIM easements have food plots.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**

No

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**

No

**Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?**

Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

Existing trails and roads are identified during the easement acquisition process and are often excluded from the easement area if they serve no purpose to easement maintenance, monitoring, or enforcement. Some roads and trails, such as agricultural field accesses, are allowed to remain.

**Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition?**

Yes

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

Under the terms of the RIM easement, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. Easements are monitored annually by SWCDs in cooperation with BWSR for the first five years and then every third year after easement acquisition to assure compliance with easement terms.

A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost-shared from a variety of sources.

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?**

Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

Though uncommon, new trails could be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g., fire breaks, berm maintenance). Unauthorized trails are in violation of the easement.

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the BWSR RIM Reserve Program that has over 7,000 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for the for each of the first five years and then every third year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implement a process to track, monitor quality, and assure compliance with easement terms.

Under the terms of the RIM Reserve Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost-shared from a variety of sources.

**Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposal's funding and availability?**

Yes

**Other OHF Appropriation Awards**

**Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC in the past?**

Yes

**Are any of these past appropriations still OPEN?**

Yes

Approp Year	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
2022	\$4,392,000	\$11,200	\$4,380,800	0.26%
2021	\$4,170,000	\$58,300	\$4,111,700	1.4%
2018	\$5,000,000	\$3,086,600	\$1,913,400	61.73%
2017	\$5,333,000	\$3,696,200	\$1,636,800	69.31%
2016	\$6,708,000	\$5,606,100	\$1,101,900	83.57%
2015	\$4,544,000	\$4,121,800	\$422,200	90.71%
2014	\$2,200,000	\$2,110,800	\$89,200	95.95%
2013	\$3,520,000	\$3,431,600	\$88,400	97.49%
2012	\$2,090,000	\$2,088,400	\$1,600	99.92%
2011	\$2,249,000	\$2,249,000	-	100.0%
Totals	\$40,206,000	\$26,460,000	\$13,746,000	65.81%

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Activity 1 - obtain applications from eligible landowners	June 30, 2027
Activity 2 - easements recorded	June 30, 2029
Activity 3 - restorations completed, and final report submitted	June 30, 2033



**Budget**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$209,400	-	-	\$209,400
Contracts	\$42,000	-	-	\$42,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$9,404,600	-	-	\$9,404,600
Easement Stewardship	\$140,000	-	-	\$140,000
Travel	\$17,500	-	-	\$17,500
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$154,000	-	-	\$154,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$25,000	-	-	\$25,000
Supplies/Materials	\$7,500	-	-	\$7,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>	-	-	<b>\$10,000,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Engineering	0.07	4.0	\$42,800	-	-	\$42,800
Easements	0.27	6.0	\$166,600	-	-	\$166,600

**Amount of Request:** \$10,000,000

**Amount of Leverage:** -

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$363,400

**As a % of the total request:** 3.63%

**Easement Stewardship:** \$140,000

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 1.49%

**Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?**

Yes

**If the project received 50% of the requested funding**

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally. Program management costs are the exception, due to program management & oversight remaining consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

**If the project received 30% of the requested funding**

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally. Program management costs are the exception, due to program management & oversight remaining consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

**Personnel**

**Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?**

Yes

**Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?**

This is Phase 11 of an ongoing program. These funds will pay for staff time spent on new easements associated with this Phase.

**Contracts**

**What is included in the contracts line?**

The contracts line amount will be used for payments to SWCD staff for easement implementation. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easements acquisition line.

**Easement Stewardship**

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**

14 easements at \$10,000 per easement; the actual number will depend on the cost of easements. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$10,000 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship covers costs of the BWSR and local government unit staff time, travel costs, and other costs for easement monitoring, encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations, and legal enforcement.

**Travel**

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**

No

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging**

The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

**I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:**

Yes

## **Direct Support Services**

**How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?**

BWSR calculates and periodically reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

## **Other Equipment/Tools**

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**

Steel posts and signs to mark the easement boundaries.

## **Federal Funds**

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**

No

**Output Tables**

**Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	-	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	823	0	0	823
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>823</b>

**Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$493,800	-	-	\$493,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$9,506,200	-	-	\$9,506,200
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>

**Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	41	41	82	618	41	823
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>823</b>

**Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$24,600	\$24,600	\$49,200	\$370,800	\$24,600	\$493,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$473,600	\$473,600	\$947,100	\$7,138,300	\$473,600	\$9,506,200
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$498,200</b>	<b>\$498,200</b>	<b>\$996,300</b>	<b>\$7,509,100</b>	<b>\$498,200</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>

**Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$11,550	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

**Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$11,551	\$11,551	\$11,550	\$11,550	\$11,551
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

3 miles

## Parcels

### **Sign-up Criteria?**

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

### **Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**

Through a combination of eligibility screening followed by a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Buffers program evaluates each application on the potential to restore ecological functions and values; optimizing wildlife habitat benefits and providing other benefits including water quality. Each site is evaluated on its benefits to the surrounding landscape and any site-specific features that are important for permanent protection of habitat.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to indicate a site's usefulness as a corridor or as an extension of an existing habitat complex.

BWSR will continue to utilize similar science-based considerations as have been historically used by the RIM Buffers Program.

## RIM Buffers Phase XI

### Phase XI Request

Corridors for wildlife are critical to linking larger habitat complexes while maintaining agricultural landscapes. RIM Buffers Phase 11 targets parcels where landowners are experiencing flooding, erosion, and sedimentation resulting in marginal agricultural production.

- Permanent protection and restoration of 823 acres
- Permanently protects, restores, and manages resources while private ownership continues
- \$10 million request
- Clean Water Fund dollars contribute



### Funding History and Accomplishments



- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Phases I – IV</b>   | <b>\$10,059,000</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Over 2,800 acres protected through OHF funding</li> <li>■ Over 4,000 acres total protected acres of riparian habitat (all sources of funding)</li> </ul>              |                     |
| <b>Phases V – VIII</b>   | <b>\$21,585,000</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Using Clean Water Fund and federal leverage in combination with OHF funding, an estimated 8,400 acres of environmentally sensitive lands will be protected</li> </ul> |                     |
| <b>Phase VIII – X</b>  | <b>\$8,562,000</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ an estimated 1,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands will be protected</li> </ul>  |                     |

### Outcomes – Benefits to Minnesotans

- Restores and permanently protects wildlife habitat that supports healthy populations
- Improves hunting and fishing by building permanent wildlife complexes
- Creates and sustains Minnesota jobs

## Enhances MN Buffer Law Through Expanded Riparian Protection

- May cover waters not required to have a buffer
- Uses technical criteria to design and install a water quality buffer above the 50 ft requirement
- Provides an opportunity to protect expiring CRP

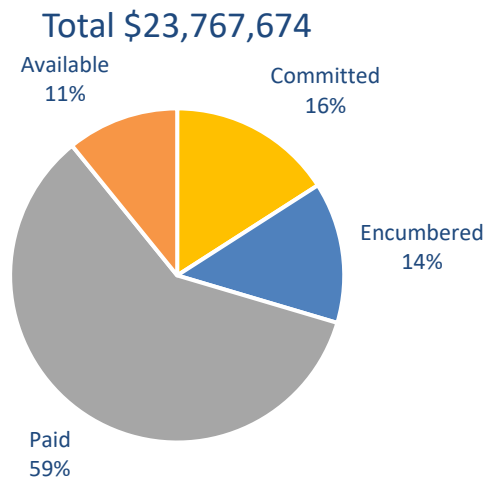
Example of a watercourse without a vegetative buffer



Example of an expanded vegetative buffer



## Phase I – X Landowner Easement Payments







## RIM RIPARIAN AND FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS SCORING SHEET

Landowner Name:	County/SWCD Office:
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**Offer must meet these minimum criteria to be eligible:**

*\*Offer meets minimum enrollment size (8-acres) or meets waiver requirements*

*\*A minimum scoring threshold may be set based on applications received in a given batching period*

Total Score

Choose only ONE answer per question below

**1. Will this offer enroll and protect land under an existing CRP contract? (maximum score 5)**

Score

- a. Yes — 5 pts
- b. No — 0 pts

CRP Contract Expiration:	
CRP Contract Practice:	

Existing CRP = land with an executed CRP-1 at least 1-year prior to the date of application.

**2. Proximity to existing permanently protected habitat complex (maximum score 20)**

Score

- a. Permanently protected land or another RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration eligible offer or approved contract is on both ends of the land offered in this application — 20 pts
- b. Permanently protected land or another RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration eligible offer or approved contract is only on one end of the land offered in this application — 15 pts
- c. Permanently protected land or another RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration eligible offer or approved contract on the same watercourse/water body is within 1/2 mile of either end of the land offered in this application — 5 pts
- d. None of the above — 0 pts

**3. Proximity to public land that is open for public hunting (maximum score 5)**

Score

- a. Immediately adjacent — 5 pts
- b. Within 1 mile — 3 pts
- c. None of the above — 0 pts

**4. The offered area will result in addressing water quality concerns for conventional pollutants (e.g., sediment, phosphorus, hydrology, bacteria, nitrogen) as identified in a TMDL report or implementation plan or a WRAPS (maximum score 8)**

Score

- a. Yes — 8 pts
- b. No — 0 pts

<b>BWSR Use Only</b>	
	/100
Program Manager Approval	Score



# RIM RIPARIAN AND FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS SCORING SHEET

**5. Type of water source being protected (maximum score 15)**

Score

- a. River/Stream (including Public Drainage Systems that are Public Waters) — 15 pts
- b. Lake — 10 pts
- c. Wetland — 5 pts
- d. Public Drainage System — 0 pts

**6. Easement size (maximum score 15)**

Score

- a. >20 acres — 15 pts
- b. 11 - 20 acres — 10 pts
- c. 8 - 10 acres — 5 pts
- d. <8 acres — 0 pts (REQUIRES APPROVED WAIVER TO BE ELIGIBLE)

**7. Is the offered acreage located within a high priority or priority area identified in a locally adopted Comprehensive Water Management Plan (CWMP)? List document name and page number of adopted or draft plan below. (maximum score 20)**

Score

- a. High Priority — 20 pts
- b. Priority — 10 pts

**8. The offered area is beneficial to, and within 1 miles of, a breeding/population of Federal or State listed endangered or threatened species as identified by DNR Natural Heritage Database (State special concerns species shall not be considered), Federal species to be considered include endangered, threatened, and candidate species, including designated critical habitat (e.g., Topeka Shiner). (maximum score 2)**

Score

- a. Yes — 2 pts
- b. No — 0 pts

**9. Since 2000, how many times has the offered acreage been inundated or had crop loss due to flooding? (maximum score 2)**

Score

- a. ≥4 — 2 pts
- b. 1 - 3 — 1 pt
- c. 0 — 0 pts

**10. Additional wildlife benefits (maximum score 8)**

Score

- 0
- 2
- 4
- 6
- 8

Determine score from Additional Wildlife Benefits GIS layer and check appropriate score box 20 (red) on the GIS layer = 8 on the scoring sheet, 15 (yellow) = 6, 10 (green) = 4, 5 (blue) = 2, 0 (gray) = 0